Explicit

No Archive Warnings Apply

M/M

Iron Lung (2026)
Project Hail Mary (2026)

The Convict | Simon (Iron Lung)/Ryland Grace

The Convict | Simon (Iron Lung)
Ryland Grace

Rocky - Freeform
Amputee Simon
simon has pots
Traumatized Simon
Yearner Grace
Simon is also Yearning but differently
Hurt/Comfort
Simon trusting Grace
Romantic Tension
Sexual Tension
Once again I am throwing these two randomly onto the aroace spect
but i will not be elaborating
author who is also on the aroace spect
Mutual Pining
Slight Misunderstanding
That gets resolved
Sexual and Non Sexual Intimacy
Confessions
Love language? No - comfort language
And Simon’s is touch
I do want to make it clear
Grace loves Simon this much regardless of the attraction
not because of it
Adrian uses they/them pronouns
Fluff
Cultural Differences
porn with a lot of fucking plot
Emotions
Grace is also traumatized
but is fighting through it
They both need a Hug
they’re both neurodivergent as fuck
and they fuck
Grace is an absolute mess
awkward as hell
And Simon loves him for it
Grinding
Dry Humping
Teasing

slight begging
And the sex? Fully clothed btw
Clothed Sex
English

The Day Will Fade Away

Lex_To-Be-Kind-Takes-Work (Seth_Silver_Ink)

Summary:

After nearly passing out trying to take a shower, Grace offers his help to Simon to wash his hair.

Notes:

I'm delighted to finally have this out, I've been stuck on it for two days and really had to work myself up to it. I'm still very inexperienced and, more than anything, not as confident when it comes to writing things of an explicit nature, so positive reinforcement and your thoughts are more than welcome and very immensely appreciated. I cannot overstate how marvelous it is to see them, they make my day every time and are one of my main inspirations for creating and sharing more and everyone has been so kind.

Enough of my rambling, please enjoy the story.

I'm coming back later to do edits. too tired right now.

(See the end of the work for more notes (#work_endnotes) .)

Grace sighs as he finishes the last of the reports Adrian sent his way. The two have been swapping notes and teaching one another for weeks trying to catch each other up to speed in their field and knowledge. Endless files to learn, and each of them having to translate it all on top of it- and differing mediums at that. Just as Grace closes his laptop, there's a crash from farther in the house that sends him flying over the couch.

"Simon?" The only response to meet Grace is silence that runs too long. Calling out, Grace swiftly steps down the hall, doing quick scans of the rooms for even a glimpse of the other as worry begins to eat at his sides. "Simon, where you at? Are you alright?"

Stopping to hold his breath for a moment, he hears the shower shortly before the water is cut. Taking longer strides to the bathroom, he reaches to knock on the door just as it's swung open, revealing a half dressed Simon, who's leaning his weight against the door, dazed and fighting for his life to keep himself upright. His head is swaying in the heavy fog of steam, his mismatched eyes falling on Grace.

He tries to push past Grace, but instead almost succeeds in sending them both tumbling down. "I gotcha, I gotcha," Grace catches Simon, tossing his own nerves to the side to focus on helping him out into the cooler, open air. Simon grips one of the sleeves of Grace's hoodie harshly, trying to steady himself as his breathing comes out uneven, as if trying to do so again for the first time. "Si, what's wrong?" He leads the shorter man over to the bed, sitting him down carefully.

Simon's grasp on Grace's sleeve loosens and tightens, as though he's unsure of if he wants to let go or not, so Grace sits beside him, still holding him in his arms loosely. He isn't sure exactly *what* made Simon's mind up to choose to trust him after the first few months, but when he did, he sorta became more… physical, to put it. He sought comfort out by being near Grace, or even tethering to him some how. He's more than comfortable to initiate touch, and it feels… pretty great that Simon is willing to trust him, to be vulnerable with him. He also thinks part of it is that sometimes Simon may not be able to verbalize what's happening or what he needs. So Grace does his best to meet him where he is, and that hasn't led him astray yet.

"Dizzy, I got…" his breathing is still touch and go, leaning his head on Grace's shoulder, too heavy to keep holding up on his own, "I got lightheaded. 'M fine."

Silently taking a deep breath, Grace takes a short second to figure out how to tell Simon that getting *extremely lightheaded* in the shower after only a few minutes is absolutely *not* just *fine*. "Yeaaah, no. Si, that's not normal." How long has Simon been dealing with this? Is this the only time it's happened? Grace adds this to his mental file of things that Simon may or may not have been trying to deal with on his own.

Curling closer onto Grace's lap because he can't hold himself upright, Simon remains silent, his heavily scarred cheek pressing against Grace's collarbone, almost as if trying to hide the mutated and marred half of his face into Grace's offered comfort, his warmth bleeding through every point of contact and driving Grace up a wall for more.

The flustered part of Grace's mind yells at him, because even after being given all this contact the past few months, he's still soaking it all in as though he's been starving for it. And distantly, he thinks he has. That really should be the farthest thing from his mind right now, but his worry for Simon overrides every train of thought currently screaming at him.

Rubbing circles into Simon's back with the heel of his palm, Grace lets him have a moment. He leans his cheek on Simon's head, noting how it's still unwashed, confirming for him that Simon wasn't in there very long. "Can you remember what was happening before you got lightheaded?"

"I was… The water was hot, but it was so *fucking* comfortable." Simon melts into Grace's touch, causing his own chest to squeeze tight. *Stars,* Grace wants to hold him close and smooth the edges that dare to hurt him and kiss away every scar- *Woah-oh there, Grace! We talked about this, Simon needs a* ***friend****, not the romantic adjacent feelings you've gotten for the first time since college. You've gotten really good at being a friend. Be that.* "I felt lighter than I had in a long time," Grace can feel how Simon tenses in his arms as he recalls the moment, and Grace swallows this pit of guilt that's trying to grow in his throat, especially as it conflicts for space against the sorrow he's feeling for the man in his arms, "but then I couldn't… *Shit.* There was too much, damn- I-"

Gathering Simon firmer in his arms, Grace gently murmurs to Simon, as though trying to softly scrub the worry and anxiety away, hold him together like Simon is trusting him to do. He can put enough together that it had something to do with the ocean again. Up until this attempt, Simon has had an aversion to water, or, more accurately, probably having to be *in* water, Grace supposes. He keeps his distance from it on the beach; Rocky and Adrian are working on an extension to the biodome, but are stalling so they can get input from Simon, who's only *just* started warming up to Adrian the past few *days.* For hygiene, what Simon *has* been doing the past six months is using a bowl of water, soap, and a wash cloth. Though Arm-ando had been who cleaned Simon upon his unconscious arrival, he refused letting the robot help him with anything more than just strictly medical aid because he finds him unsettling, specifically when it comes to *this.*

"I just wanted to take a fucking shower," Simon takes a breath that rattles his entire body, "All the washing hasn't made it go the fuck away so I thought if I just took the damn shower then- fucking dammit!" He shifts, suddenly pulling himself upright and slightly out of Grace's arms, almost too quickly, wobbling on his own weight, his had for the first time letting go of Grace and burying into his own hair, feeling his scalp. "And the thick layer of shit building up on my scalp isn't helping a damn thing!"

"What if I wash your hair for you?" Grace lowers his arms to loosely loop around Simon's waist, giving him a bit more breathing room.

Simon tenses for a moment, looking away from Grace as he thinks it over.

The chances of Simon accepting or rejecting the offer are pretty equal. While Simon finds immense comfort in touch, more than he probably cares to admit out loud, he also has to allow it, be in control of it. And Grace has let him.

"And in return, we can sit down to brainstorm for the extension to the biodome." Grace doesn't like it, but he has to play Simon's game a little bit in order for Simon to feel comfortable enough accepting *anything* from him. Most of the time, Grace is able to get away with easing Simon into the whole *'you don't have to* ***do*** *anything in return'* bit, and they've made so much progress! But, as much as Simon has come to trust him and is willing to try for him, Simon still has a hard time trusting it. Grace learned that he has to give Simon time to adjust. He's afraid that Simon may not let go of the transactional thing, but he has to be willing to trust Simon at least as much as Simon has been willing to trust him. And after what Simon has told him, asking for his trust is asking for a lot. Grace has to offer the same in return. "You can say no."

"I-" Simon's fist clenches Grace's sleeve again, leaning the slightest bit closer as he weighs his words. Finally, he nods slowly, "But it can't be in there." His nose wrinkles, creasing the scar that stretches across his face.

"We could do it at the kitchen sink." Grace offers him a gentle smile, the same one he's offered any of his students or a friend in the past. "I've done it for myself before. It's larger, more space, I could get a different head attachment for the sprayer."

Once again, Simon nods to that too. "Give me a couple days to work up to it."

"Of course," Simon leans into Grace's touch once more so he begins to rub his back again but with more firmness, pushing the tension out of his muscles, "and I could see about Adrian or Rocky making new accessories for the sink."

Simon pauses at that and looks calculatingly at Grace, who takes it as his cue to explain.

"To make it more comfortable for this specifically. Adrian would be more than willing to make an attachment you can lean backwards into while you sit in a comfortable chair, rather than trying to lean forward with the faucet to the back of

your head." Like a salon. If Simon's willing to do this, Grace is going to make sure it's as comfortable and accommodating as possible. "And, if you want, you can rinse my hair first so you can see and understand what will happen before hand."

Just the slightest twitch at the corner of Simon's mouth only hinting at the mere *ghost* of a smile has Grace's heart soaring. And in this moment, none of the chaos that's been happening on the sidelines of his thoughts matter. Not in comparison to this. Once again, Simon leans into Grace, hesitantly, almost fighting the urge to let himself.

"Yeah." Simon releases a bone-deep sigh, "Thank you."

"No problem." After a long moment, Grace looks about, trying to gauge the appropriate way to untangle himself from Simon, or if he should remain until Simon removes himself? But what if Simon's waiting on *him* to move? Should he use hug rules? His hug rule is usually the person who initiates the hug is the one who decides when its done…

Simon pinches Grace's cheek to pull him out of his head, unmoving from where he's hiding himself. "Let me stay like this for two more minutes and then you're free." Simon pauses, before adding on, almost ashamedly, "Sorry for making you help-"

Oop, line drawn. "Simon," his Very Stern voice falls out by reflex, "you didn't *make* me do anything. I care about you," Grace grounds his thoughts back to where he is with Simon, letting go of the tension in his own body, "If you need help, I *want* to help. Can I get-" Grace catches himself as he begins slipping a bit too far into Mr. Grace. At this point Simon is staring up at him with the first genuine smile Grace has caught and the whisper of a chuckle hiding just behind it. "Sorry," he can feel the heat rise quickly to his face, the sparkle in Simon's eye's threatens to have him tripping over his words, but it settles comfortably in his chest as a small well of pride pours over him, "force of habit." He clears his throat. "But, point still stands, teacher bits aside. We can help each other here, right?"

Simon nods, still nervously fidgeting with the fabric of Grace's sleeve. "Right." And before Grace tries to think of something he could say, Simon leans back in to nestle his head into the crook of Grace's neck, breath ghosting over his skin.

…

"Hey, Rocky, I need a favor," Grace pulls his best friend aside after one of his advanced course class, setting up the 3D mock-up and pulls up blueprints on his screen.

The Eridian bounces to his feet excitedly. *"Grace finally look for advice for mate, question?"*

"N-" Grace does a double take, looking back at his friend. "Rocky again with this? No. We aren't- He doesn't- I- No. No no no no no."

Rocky chirps a string of things that Grace does not have in the old translator, and not because Grace *couldn't* do it.

"Hey, hey, Rocky, back off. Si is still settling in the dome." Rocky has been pulling on this for too long. And Grace cannot tell if he's serious or if he's joking because at first Rocky was serious, but then Rocky spooked a very trigger happy Simon right off the bat and Rocky threatened putting Simon in a separate dome for Grace's safety. Grace was able to explain that the way Rocky introduced himself was for someone who's already probably been acquainted with him, and that it probably wasn't the best for someone like Simon, who seems to have been through a lot. And then recently Adrian has grown attached to Simon. Grace is thrilled over it, because Simon is opening up to them in return, but doesn't know if Adrian's opinion has swayed Rocky or not.

"Why take longer than Grace, question?" Rocky shyly pokes at the pebbled sand. *"Simon ready for help gifts?"*

Easing at the mention of the surprise Rocky and Adrian planned with him months ago, Grace smiles tiredly. "Not yet buddy. He's still… trying to make peace."

Grace watches as it dawns on Rocky. *"Not settled yet. Simon… ask for accommodations, question?"*

Shaking his hand in a *'sorta'* motion as he tilts his head from side to side, "That's actually what I want to talk to you about." Grace gestures to the mock set up. "I want to make additions to the kitchen sink."

"Additions?" Rocky tilts his body in curiosity as he takes in the set up. *"For what function, question?"*

Sitting beside his model of a salon sink attachment. "I'm going to help Simon with something and I want to help him," Grace demonstrates by resting his neck in the dip of the mock sink's edge, "to be as comfortable as possible."

Rocky doesn't quite follow. *"Why Simon head in sink, question?"*

"One of the human hygiene habits is washing hair," Grace makes the motion of scrubbing his scalp for Rocky, and reaches over to the model's faucet and pulls out the mock hose that makes it a sprayer, though it's much flimsier since it's just a model to show Rocky… "Simon accepted my help and this would be best."

Rocky doesn't budge, so he's still caught up on something. *"Do- hmm…"* Rocky pauses, his chirp muting into a whirring as he thinks over his question. He takes out his screen reader and looks at the blue prints, scanning it multiple times over before finally turning back to Grace. *"Grace need anything else, question?"*

There's a specific… level of concern to Rocky's voice. It's one that almost reminds Grace of the parents to his kids back on earth when trying to broach a sensitive topic. But Grace still doesn't know what Rocky is *trying* to ask. "No, this is it?"

His best friend shifts his weight, contemplating his next words. *"Do humans need…Erm… word Rocky needs…"* Rocky's posture is awkward and unsure.

Trying to understand, Grace leans forward, balancing on his feet in a sitting squat. "Describe it if we haven't done a translation."

As Rocky begins to explain, Grace tries to piece it together, but once Rocky gets further into his explanation, Grace becomes absolutely *mortified* just because of how off guard it caught him.

"Rocky, no! We don't- Absolutely not." Grace screams internally, his face entirely way too hot from what was just implied. "That's not what's- Okay sometimes, yeah, that's what *some* human *couples* do, but not most of the time- Look we are not-" Grace flails his arms, "Buddy context is VERY important here!"

Then Rocky begins to laugh at him. *Are you serious-*

"You're *laughing* at me? Why are you laughing at me, question?!" Grace buries his face in his hands to muffle a scream, which only makes Rocky laugh more intensely. "Well I'm sorry that, culturally, humans doing one another's hygiene means something very different from eridians!"

"Okay, okay, okay! Rocky just need to make sure. Rocky Adrian make install Grace's request overnight." Rocky, as much as he loves pulling reactions out of Grace, really was just looking out for him. Which would be touching if Grace didn't feel so embarrassed, which, is something he thought he wouldn't feel again since having gotten comfortable on this planet and the eridians being more than understanding for Grace's cultural differences.

Even though Grace still can't believe that Rocky just asked him if humans had a such thing as condoms, essentially. "Yeah, thanks, and please explain to Adrian that *this* isn't *that!"*

Rocky tilts up at him. *"No."*

A whole new wave of embarrassment rolls over Grace as he begins to ineffectually hit his fists against Rocky's suit while the damned Eridian *laughs* at him *again.*

…

The longer Grace lays back while Simon stands next to him, rinsing water thoroughly through his hair, the more Grace relaxes. The warm water always feels nice, but this is much different than both a shower or a bath. Once Simon has eased his nerves enough, he puts the sprayer back and shuts the water off. As Grace slowly sits back up, Simon already has the hand towel in his grasp, but holds it close to himself.

"What's on your mind?" Grace rubs the back of his neck, trying to get rid of the residual tension. "If you still want more time, that's ok-"

"Could I," Simon shifts, still trying to read Grace. He's usually very intentional about not coming across as any sort of unsure or scared, but he's been allowing his uncertainty to show around Grace lately. "Let me dry your hair?"

Grace is torn between making sure Simon knows he doesn't have to or allowing Simon to help. On one hand, what if this is reinforcing the transactional habit too much? He wants to give Simon space to grow from it, but Grace is also unsure of where the line of enabling comes into play. But on the other hand, what if this is Simon's way of growing out of it? Offering help so it makes it easier to accept help? *Grace, trust him like you're asking him to trust you.* "Yeah, I'd like that."

For the second time in as many days, a soft smile makes Grace's chest seize. His breath gets trapped in his lungs, as though trying to freeze time to preserve this moment. Simon, who was so scared and aggressive when Grace first met him, who had been through the unimaginable, who treats everything with curiosity and wanting to learn how things tick, who has stolen one of Grace's tablets (that Grace conveniently left out for him) to learn as much as what was available to him. Simon, who asked Grace questions when he was just rambling to himself, poking to get more of an insight of Grace, who in turn gave him everything. Somewhere along the line, Grace realized Simon doesn't like things being kept from him, and Grace very naturally is open about most things and that's probably why Simon decided he could trust him.

The only thing he hasn't been open about are the feelings he keeps trying to pack away, and part of that is because he's been having a hard enough time trying to pin them down to figure them out. The way he feels for Simon, it's- it's so different for him but he still knows its not the same as what people have wanted from him in the past even if it feels like it. There's no way Grace is about to give that to him while Simon is still gathering his bearings.

Grace leans slightly forward, resting his elbows on his knees. When Simon's touch comes, it's hesitantly firm, but there's still this underlying carefulness to it. Almost like Simon might be afraid that if he isn't gentle, he'll hurt Grace.

Exhaling a content sigh, Grace's shoulder go lax as he leans more into Simon's touch, encouraging the other to apply more pressure.

You aren't going to break me. I promise. Grace keeps the thought to himself, saving it for a different time, if at all. Simon is the type that Grace will have to show his work to, not just give him the answer and demand compliance to that conclusion.

The touch becomes more confident, massaging Grace's scalp as the towel soaks in the excess water. He relaxes so far into the touch that he closes his eyes and drifts into the feeling more, not even realizing that he's leaning his forehead against Simon's chest. Simon slows almost to a stop after awhile, but still absentmindedly dragging the pads of his fingers up and down the base of his skull, turning Grace into putty as he tilts the man's head back and lazily opens his eyes with a hum.

Simon is staring down at him with an unreadable expression, still putting a delightful amount of pressure on Grace, keeping his mind floating above the usual chaos and noise that he lives in. The other studies his face, as if trying to figure out a puzzle and it pulls a grin to Grace's lips. He loves to watch Simon's gears turn. Most of the time. Sometimes not, like when he gets too in his own head and Grace will choose then to begin trying to work a problem out loud, and it helps get Simon back to the present. But right here, right now, Simon is more grounded than Grace, something tells him distantly. And it's alright.

"I would like to do this often, if you're alright with that." Simon's voice is gentle and coarse, the low baritone bringing Grace back slowly, like the tide as it ebb and flows. "This… feels right." The vulnerability hidden in Simon's tone brings Grace back entirely.

"Me too," a lazy hum slips from Grace as Simon scratches one spot *just* right, "especially if you do it like that every time, I haven't had this feeling in years…" he can feel a silly grin cross his face, maybe not back entirely after all, he muses. He honestly can't remember the last time he felt this kind of comfort and affection. "I'll try to make you feel at least half as good, Si, because, gosh, you're *amazing."* Grace's grin softens to something different, more pleased, as he leans backwards into Simon's touch again.

And Simon stands a little straighter at that, not in stress or worry, but in full pride, the feeling written all over the man's face. Tenderly sliding his hand down to cup Grace's jaw, Simon presses their foreheads together, the towel separating the feel of Simon's callused hand from Grace's face as he can feel his own skin jump in temperature. Unsure of what any of this gesture means to Simon, Grace returns the same delicate pressure.

Simon pulls away after a moment of stillness between them, looking unsure of himself again.

Did Grace do the wrong thing? Shaking off any panic that may have tried to rear up, Grace inhales deeply, moving forward. "Alrighty, your turn," with a burst of energy, he jumps up from the chair and double checks that everything is organized on the counter.

Simon avoids his gaze as he takes a seat and leans back, suddenly much more tense than he had been just moments ago.

Son of a biscuit, I messed up didn't I? Grace swallows harshly, tapping the counter with his pointer finger. *Alright, no way around it Ryland, gotta talk about it.* Nodding to himself, Grace straightens the shampoo bottle to parallel the conditioner and moves the scalp massager closer to the sink.

However, when he turns around, Simon is nearly shaking, his face some combination of regret and anger. Concerned, Grace puts himself closer into Simon's line of sight, "Si, what's wrong?" Grace almost reaches out to touch the other, but clenches his fist as he pulls his hand back to himself. "If you're not ready for this next part, it's okay. Or…" Grace has to root himself in place, fighting the urge to slip away, "did I do something wrong? You can tell me when I-"

Simon grits his teeth, still pointedly not looking at Grace. "I'm sorry," his breathing is shaky and uneven, "I'm the one who shouldn't have… I- I'm sorry."

"Hey, Simon," Grace leans himself into Simon's sight again, bending his torso over to align with Simon's so they're on the same level, *standing over him, not gonna help whatever is happening,* "I'm not upset, you're okay, I'm okay. We're okay. Let's talk about it? Would that be alright?"

Appearently, Grace trying to diffuse the situation works because Simon looks him up and down and laughs. Well. It's the cross between a huff and a laugh, but Grace has caused enough of them to know it's still a laugh. A win is a win. He gives Simon a friendly grin and the other takes a deep breath and releases it before leaning forward to sit up straighter.

Following his movements, Grace tilts his head slightly, "Do you want me to hold you?" Grace still isn't as used to being the one to initiate, and he definitely isn't going to without asking.

Simon averts his gaze again before catching himself and shaking his head as he forces himself to look back up to Grace.

"Alright, but you can change your mind, if you want, okay?"

He nods slightly. “I’m…” Grace can practically hear Simon swallow the apology that was a on the edge of his tongue. “I shouldn’t have done that, especially without asking.” The words are ground out, tension building up in Simon’s jaw. It nearly makes Grace wince just thinking about it.

“Tell me what you meant by it and let me be the one to decide that,” Grace hates to see that Simon is internally punishing himself. It had felt right to Grace, even if he probably shouldn’t have reciprocated it without knowing, and he knew that. “Maybe I’m the one in the wrong.”

Simon’s eyes cut back to Grace with the sharpness of a blade, but he almost immediately folds once their gazes meet. The sharpness instead turns inward as he speaks, “Grace, no, I’m serious. This isn’t where you hold my damn hand and baby me as if I haven’t crossed a line.” The venom in Simon’s voice drips back down his throat like a poison, one that he swallows every drop of.

Grace stands his ground, making sure that Simon knows that kindness is still a choice here, one that Grace will always choose and Simon can’t change that. “Explain it to me and then we can debate that.”

“It…” Simon pauses before exhaling sharply, turning his body to face Grace entirely, his hand reaching out to hold one of Grace’s as if praying for forgiveness. “I shouldn’t have done it because back… where I came from, you only do that if you both…. You-” Simon starts over, and is cutting closer to the point, but still cutting corners, “It’s only supposed to be done between people who have committed themselves to each other.”

Grace nods slowly. That makes… sense, but he feels that Simon is still leaving key components out… He can narrow it down, sure, but there’s still a broad array of things it could mean. “Committed as in like,” Grace crosses one arm to rest his elbow into his palm, waving his free hand back and forth a bit, “as in like, married or something?”

Simon’s eye twitches and he takes in another sharp, almost stabbing breath, “Yeah, as in married or something, Grace. As in something that is not done without building the relationship for it, what I did was- It was *wrong.* There’s a lot of things in my past I have done, and a lot I haven’t, but this- Grace, this, and to *you?* God, I-”

Just as Simon is about to bury is hand into his hair and probably pull it, Grace quickly slips his hand in, intertwining their fingers and catching Simon’s attention back on him, fully. “I still don’t fully get it, but I never fully got this sort of thing to begin with, Simon.” Grace keeps his tone kind and open. “I liked how it felt. Yeah, I’m probably speaking out of just straight naivety, but I returned it because it felt right to me.” Grace relaxes his hold on Simon’s hand, cradling it with both of his own, “I haven’t been fully… honest to you.” Grace looks up from Simon’s hand to Simon himself, who is staring at Grace with shock and a hint of vulnerability, enough that it tears Grace up with his own guilt. “I have excuses for it, but they’re still just excuses. And it’s still *hard* for me to put into words.”

“Explain it to me.” Simon mimics Grace’s words and grips one of his hands, pleadingly, eyes looking desperately up at Grace. That look sends a tidal wave of conflicting and differing feelings over him.

“I…” Grace searches in Simon’s eyes for something, not even really *knowing* what, but he finds *something.* “Simon, this isn’t something that I understand well enough to explain, but I feel it strongly. I understand it through you, more than I ever have.” Grace pushes a calm almost shaky breath out his nose before moving the hand that Simon isn’t holding onto like a lifeline to Simon’s jawline. He rolls his thumb over Simon’s cheek and rubs his jaw to encourage the man to soften his tension. “You… Simon have this strength, this fire, this fight to you that rivals the force of the universe, but you still find the gentleness in yourself to hold much of it with wonder and you’re willing to keep trying even when you’ve been left in jagged glass.” Swallowing hard, Grace still manages to pull a smile, one there because of the man before him, “Despite everything you’ve been dealt, you still burn so, *so bright,* Simon.” *I love every facet you’ve given me the privilege to witness.*

“I-” Simon closes his mouth, not sure how to respond. Grace almost drops in regret for even speaking, but that look of pure wonder on Simon’s face keeps him higher than any wave of thought could ever reach. Deciding that he can’t string words together to respond to *that,* Simon lets go of Grace’s hand and loops his arm around his waist, hold him as close as he can.

And, in turn, Grace wraps both arms around Simon, returning the embrace with the same level of force, and daring the universe to even try taking Simon from him. Grace can feel Simon grip the back of his shirt into his fist and knows that the man probably just had the same thought, Simon’s head pressed against his chest, over his heart.

Grace has no idea how long they stay like that, but he doesn’t make any move to let go until Simon does, and even then, they pull apart just enough to look at each other’s faces. Grace feels his chest tear open just the slightest bit more as Simon looks up at him with awe and a tear threatening to form in his eyes.

Now, none of that. Grace gives Simon another soft smile as he holds both sides of Simon’s face gently, wiping the tears away. Then, Simon shifts, unsure. Grace tilts his head wordlessly. “I don’t want to let go. Not anytime soon, Grace.”

Grace presses a kiss to Simon’s temple, “That’s okay.”

“But I also really, really, really need my scalp to stop feeling like this.” A tremor of sever discomfort goes down Simon’s spine, but he doesn’t loosen his hold around Grace.

Grace rests his elbows on Simon's shoulders and taps one of his fingers against the others, in thought. "Well, it's one or the otHER-"

Simon leans back into the chair, pulling Grace into his lap, who gives a high-pitched yelp.

Oh my gosh oh my gosh oh my gosh I AM STRADDLING SIMON, stars… please help me-

As the blood rushes to Grace's face, Simon only gives him a self-satisfied smirk. "There's an answer to every problem, Grace." Simon rubs the middle of Grace's back, easing away an old ache he carries there. "Are you alright with this?"

There's a smile that stretches across Grace's face very much against his will, and he's positive that it's out of pure embarrassment, but he doesn't… really want to get down either. *Oh no. This is bad. Bad idea.* Despite his internal panic, Grace nods, his heart beating quickly with this daring *thrill* to it, especially when *Simon* is looking at him like *that.* Simon leans back, resting his neck into the sink's dip just as Grace had, the towel cushioning him. "Yeah," his voice cracks, "I, uh, this is, mhmm. Yuppers." *I cannot believe i just freaking said that.*

And the look Simon gives him at that. Yeah, Grace will be passed away before the end of this. He can feel this sensitive heat travel up and spread over his entire back. Which Simon's hand is still touching. *Very sensitive.* Grace repeats, *VERY SENSITIVE.*

Grace breathes in deeply, trying to force his brain back on track. *Task, Grace, focus on the task.* "Alrighty, yeah," Grace reaches over to the sink, grabbing the nozzle "let's get you wet- YOUR HAIR-" Grace almost slips and falls onto Simon out of sheer mortification. "Yeah," he says much quieter after he catches himself, bracing one hand on the edge of sink, next to Simon's head. Who chuckles and presses a chaste kiss to the inner side of Grace's wrist. In spite of, well, *everything,* it calms Grace's nerves. So he takes a deep breath and slowly releases it.

As Grace reaches to turn on the water, Simon speaks up, "Grace," the taller man looks down to meet his gaze, "You can- If you don't want to do any of-" Simon bites part of his lip, trying to place his words down right, gaze sliding away from Grace.

Releasing a silent huff, Grace offers him a grin, "I'll let you know. Though, everything you're doing is, uh," Simon looks back up at him, his eyes deep and endless, "yes. That is my current answer. If it changes, I will inform ya, yeah?"

Simon grins, and moves to lean up, probably to give Grace a kiss. However, Grace smirks, gently pressing the hand that was braced on the sink down onto the center of Simon's chest. "Hair first, Si."

Rolling his eyes, Simon shakes his head as he relaxes back down. Simon closes his eyes as Grace makes another reach for the faucet's handle. Before he turns it on, however, he does lean down to press a trail of kisses along Simon's jaw, his facial hair lightly scratching his lips.

The distraction plan works, as Simon relaxes with Grace's affection and he moves his hand down to rest on Grace's hip, his pointer finger just barely brushing underneath his shirt. The touch makes him jolt, causing Simon to open his eyes in alarm, afraid he had hurt him.

"I'm okay, sorry, just… ticklish…" *Yeah. Totally. Mhmm.* A smug look takes over Simon's face and it takes every bit of willpower Grace possesses not to shift his hips at the sight. Grace feels the need to deflect *immediately.* "I'm about to run water through your hair." Grace stares very pointedly on the task at hand. Carefully running water through Simon's hair.

For awhile, he falls into a routine of motion. Basic rinse, use the scalp massager to loosen up all the crud bothering Simon. Simon tenses through this step, as he hadn't been able to properly or thoroughly clean his scalp in a long time. Grace rinses again, just to knock out anything that came detached entirely. Taking the shampoo, Grace applies a very generous amount to the scalp massager and begins gently scrubbing at Simon's scalp. It isn't as painful this time, just a slight bit of wincing to his sensitive spots. Rinse again. Grace places the scalp massager aside and puts a much smaller amount of shampoo in his hands and rubs them over a bit before beginning to massage Simon's scalp himself.

As soon as Grace begins to firmly knead his fingers against Simon's scalp, the man beneath him lets out this groan as he grips Grace's hip, causing him to gasp in turn. Both of them freeze and stare at the other. Grace is the first one to move again, continuing his work on Simon's scalp. Simon bites his lip to try and keep silent, but Grace is not having it with how much pressure Simon is biting down with. He'll hurt himself doing that.

And the best idea to get his attention? Apparently is to roll his hips against Simon. He meant it as a *'Hey, stop that,'* but it caused Simon to gasp and violently twitch his own hips up. Grace lands on his elbows, caging Simon's head, his breath caught in his throat, "Geez! Simon," Grace's breathing finally returns and he breathes out shakily. He's trying very hard *not* to squirm with the pressure Simon is squeezing his hip with, fingers digging into his skin in the best way.

"Me? *You're* the one that started it!" Simon's eyes are screwed shut as he's trying to even his own breathing out, his body going stiff in order to try and stay still.

"Oh, yeah… Oops. My bad, Si." Grace's breathing finally evens out and he buries his fingers back into Simon's hair, who relaxes into his touch.

However, after a few minutes, Simon rolls his hips up into Grace's and Grace can feel how hard Simon is. Grace gives another one of his high pitched yelps from the sudden action. "Simon, I'm not done yet."

"Oops," he parrots unapologetically, "my bad."

Grace's eyebrow twitches, but he returns to trying to finish Simon's hair because he's also getting impatient and is about to be fighting a losing battle of being still. And, apparently, Simon was about to sniff that out. Like fear. Only. It's Grace being horny to such a degree that he's barely focusing.

Simon starts out innocently rolling his thumb back and forth over that little bit of skin just over Grace's pants, but Grace is sensitive enough that it causes him to twitch violently with another gasp. *"Cheese and rice, Simon!"* He leans down, his cheek brushing Simon's and his fingers curl into fists, accidentally tugging the hair at the base of Simon's skull. With a groan *right* next to Grace's ear, Simon arches his back, causing both of their erections to grind against one another, pulling a moan from Grace. Simon freezes. Just as Grace is about to say something, Simon rolls his hips upwards while keeping a harsh grip on Grace's hip, guiding the man to meet him in movement. Grace's head rolls, his lips brushing Simon's ear as a whimper slips from him.

And *that* was enough to set Simon off, repeating the exact same movements as before, his grip on Grace's hip unforgiving. Grace realizes the same sensitive heat from earlier has returned and this time with a *vengeance.* His entire body was hotter and leaving him twitching as every little movement. Whether it's Simon's body against his or even just his own clothing. He pants as the heat intensifies in his back, making him arch down into Simon's warmth, which makes his head spin.

"Goshhh… Si, please-" Grace tries to move roll his hips faster, but he can't fight Simon's grasp and it only makes his desperation intensify. Simon just begins to press kisses to Grace's throat, making him whine and attempt to jerk his hips more, fully arched against Simon's body.

Taking mercy on Grace, Simon speeds up, another groan hitting Grace's ear and traveling down his spine, making every nerve ending *shudder.*

"Shit-" Grace's voice is airy, trapped higher as the word slips. He can feel a tension lower down tighten within him, he's so close-

"Ryland- Fuck!" Simon bites down on the sensitive spot between Grace's neck and shoulder, and it's enough to send him over the edge with an almost voiceless shriek. He cums just like that, fully clothed and grinding against Simon, breathing labored as he lets out one last whine.

Simon's grip tightens enough that there will probably be bruising the next day, the grinding of his hips becoming more uneven and frantic, still rolling Grace's hips against his, beginning to overstimulate him, causing him to whimper and move his hips in jerky twitches to try and help Simon.

"Simon, please cum for me, please, please, please," he wants it so bad he could cry. It's enough to push Simon over, who stills all the movement and cums with a sharp intake of breath and a stutter of his own hips against Grace's, soaking both their pants even further.

Both of them stay still for a long moment, slowly coming down from their highs as their breaths intermingle through their pants, Grace resting his forehead against Simon's. Once half of Simon's mind returns to him, he presses kisses along Grace's neck, putting special care to the mark he left.

When Grace zones back in, he hears a chorus of 'thank you's and praises from Simon. With a huffed chuckle, Grace captures Simon's lips with his own, holding him there with the hands still buried tight in Simon's hair. After a moment, Grace rests his head beside Simon's, both having nearly caught their breaths.

"I hope you're alight with me giving you a bath, Si, because we're both sticky now." Grace chuckles.

"Grace, as long as it's you, you could do anything and I'd be alright with it." Simon gingerly rubs the spot he had an iron grip on, apologizing.

"Starting with letting me finish what we were originally doing, and then bath. Can't believe I'm going to have to actually get us condoms." Grace nuzzles against Simon's ear, still trying to get some energy back.

"What the hell is a condom?"

Grace sits up, staring down at Simon in mortification. This will be a long night.

…

"Rocky?"

"Grace asking for condoms, statement."

"…Yes please."

Notes:

I couldn't find a way to squeeze it in there, and there's no way that Simon would have been willing to cough up this information because he was barely willing to accept Grace's confession, and he can't accept Grace's truth and this at the same moment, but Grace essentially comparing Simon to a star in his confession is the highest declaration of love you can give a person in Simon's universe- be it romantic, platonic, or some other secret third thing.

Thank you so much for reading! I hope you enjoyed, let me know what you thought, and I'll be to work with another BloodyMary fic as soon as I can.

also probably a good time to let any of you know that my tumblr, if you're looking for any of my BloodyMary work, thoughts, or updates, is to-be-kind-takes-work (https://www.tumblr.com/to-be-kind-takes-work) so do feel free to come check me out over there if you want updates, especially with BloodyMay (https://www.tumblr.com/bloodymary-bloodymay/814637340352970752/heres-the-list-for-bloodymay-these-can-be-posted) on the way.
Also, Grace not wanting Simon to hurt himself, but having 0 problem with being bit by him.

Your kind words keep my ideas and motivation to burn going, so thank you.
-Alexsandr

Close (#)